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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 52/62 of 10 December 1997, entitled "Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues", which reads as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that the Palestine Arab refugees are entitled to their property and to the income derived therefrom, in conformity with the principles of justice and equity;
>
> "2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps, in consultation with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, for the protection of Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel and to preserve and modernize the existing records;
>
> "3. *Calls once more upon* Israel to render all facilities and assistance to the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;
>
> "4. *Calls upon* all the parties concerned to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel that would assist him in the implementation of the present resolution;
>
> "5. *Urges* the Palestinian and Israeli sides, as agreed between them, to deal with the important issue of Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues in the framework of the final status negotiations of the Middle East peace process;
>
> "6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on the implementation of the present resolution."

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2. On 11 August 1998, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to resolutions 52/57 to 52/63 of 10 December 1997, with the request that the Permanent Representative of Israel inform him by 11 September 1998 of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. Also on 11 August 1998, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provision of resolutions 52/57 to 52/63, including paragraph 4 of resolution 52/62, and requesting information by 11 September 1998 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 19 August 1998 was received from Israel, covering various aspects of resolutions 52/57 to 52/63. The text read as follows:

> "Israel's position on these resolutions has been set forth in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years, the latest of which being Israel's note verbale of 28 July 1997. Israel regrets the fact that the resolutions regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) remain rife with political issues irrelevant to the work for which UNRWA is responsible, and thus remain detached from the reality in the area. Accordingly, Israel abstained on resolution 52/60 and voted against resolutions 52/57, 52/59, 52/61, 52/62 and 52/63.
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> "The agreements between Israel and the Palestinians mark significant progress in the framework of the peace process. Israel believes that this process is the only way to achieve historic reconciliation and lasting peace between the two sides. However, for this process to succeed, it is imperative that both sides abide by their commitments and resolve all outstanding issues through negotiations.
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> "Israel believes that UNRWA can play an important role in promoting the social and economic advancement foreseen in the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, within the limits of its humanitarian mandate, and accordingly looks forward to continuing the cooperation and good working relationship with UNRWA.
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> "In the light of the above, Israel considers it essential that the General Assembly consolidate the resolutions regarding UNRWA into one resolution directly related to the Agency's humanitarian tasks. This would also be compatible with the necessity to rationalize the work of the General Assembly."

5. No replies have been received from other Member States with regard to paragraph 4 of resolution 52/62.